

Message Text

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ACTION VO-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CA-01 INSE-00
SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
INRE-00 L-03 /072 W
-----068809 281650Z /50

O 281545Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1531

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3644

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, CVIS, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: US POLICY ON VISAS

REF: CAPE TOWN 1198

1. GABELLAH'S INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A VISITOR'S VISA TO THE UNITED STATES (REFTEL) BRINGS TO THE FORE AN ISSUE EXPECTED SINCE FORMATION OF THE INTERIM REGIME--WHAT WILL BE OUR VISA POLICY REGARDING MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. ANOTHER REQUEST BY A MR. ENOS CHIURA, AN AFRICAN BUSINESSMAN, SUPPORTER OF ZANU/MUGABE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF VISITING THE UNITED STATES IN ORDER TO ATTEND A HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL COURSE (JOHANNESBURG 1253) RAISES THE BROADER QUESTION OF VISAS FOR RHODESIANS NOT CONNECTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THERE WILL BE SOME COST FOR US REGARDLESS OF WHAT COURSE WE PURSUE. WE WISH TO APPEAR EVEN-HANDED IN OUR
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APPROACH TO ALL THE BLACK NATIONALISTS, INTERNAL AS WELL AS EXTERNAL. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE DO NOT WANT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION WE MIGHT BE MOVING TOWARD RECOGNITION OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.

2. EMBASSY RECOGNIZES THAT VISA ISSUANCE TO RHODESIANS IS BASED ON US LEGISLATION AND UN RESOLUTIONS AND MUST FOLLOW LEGAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THEM. NEVERTHELESS IT IS

OUR IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS A CERTAIN LEEWAY IN THIS INTERPRETATION. WE NOTE THAT WE APPEAR TO BE FOLLOWING A MORE RESTRICTIVE POLICY THAN THE UK OR A NUMBER OF OTHER EUROPEAN NATIONS. SINCE WE HAVE EMBARKED ON THE INITIATIVE WITH THE UK TO TRY TO HELP FIND A SOLUTION TO THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM, WE HAVE ENTERED INTO COMMUNICATION WITH ALL PARTIES INVOLVED. THIS HAS REQUIRED VISITS TO SALISBURY BY SENIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICERS. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO COMPLAINT ABOUT OUR TRAVEL IN THE AREA AND THAT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES HAS BECOME CONSIDERABLY MORE RELAXED. TRAVEL BY RHODESIANS WHICH IS NOT CLEARLY DIRECTED AT SANCTIONS-BREAKING ACTIVITIES, SEEMS GENERALLY ACCEPTED.

3. WE WOULD SEEM TO HAVE THREE BROAD ALTERNATIVES TO OUR PRESENT EXCLUSION POLICY:

(A) MAINTAIN OUR PROHIBITION IN REGARD TO VISAS FOR OFFICIALS OF THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT (INCLUDING PARLIAMENT), WHICH NOW INCLUDE THE BLACK MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM REGIME, BUT TAKE A MORE FAVORABLE AD HOC APPROACH TOWARD APPLICATIONS BY RHODESIANS WHO ARE NOT CONNECTED WITH THE CURRENT REGIME AND WHO HAVE BRITISH PASSPORTS.

(B) END OUR EXCLUSION POLICY AND ISSUE VISITORS' VISAS TO ANY RHODESIAN WHETHER OFFICIAL OR NON-OFFICIAL PROVIDING THE APPLICANT HAS A BRITISH PASSPORT AND MEETS OTHER REQUIREMENTS AS A BONA FIDE NON-IMMIGRANT.

(C) ADOPT A SELECTIVE POLICY WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE ONLY OFFICIALS
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WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE RHODESIAN FRONT AND THE RHODESIAN PARLIAMENT ON THE GROUND THAT, DESPITE THE INTERIM ARRANGEMENT WHICH HAS NOW BROUGHT BLACKS INTO THE GOVERNMENT, THE RHODESIAN FRONT AND THE OLD PARLIAMENT REMAIN THE CONTROLLING ELEMENTS IN REALITY. THIS WOULD EXCLUDE CHIRAU AND OTHER BLACKS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PRE-MARCH 3 REGIME BUT ALLOW THE POSSIBILITY OF VISAS FOR BLACK OFFICIALS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH CHIRAU OR THE PRE-MARCH 3 REGIME AND FOR SOME NON-GOVERNMENT RHODESIANS.

4. OPTION A WOULD:

--BE MORE WELCOME ALTERNATIVE BY THE FL AND PF
--CONTINUE A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE FOR THE PF
--MAKE US APPEAR TO BE TAKING THE SIDE OF THE PF
--ALIENATE THE BLACKS IN THE INTERIM REGIME
--ENCOUNTER SUBSTANTIAL CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESS OBJECTION.

5. OPTION B WOULD:

--BE EVEN-HANDED AND CONSISTENT WITH OUR EFFORT
TO AVOID TAKING SIDES
--MAKE US APPEAR TO BE MOVING TOWARD POSSIBLE ACCEPTANCE OF THE
INTERIM REGIME
--ENCOURAGE IAN SMITH AND HIS COLLEAGUES

--TEND TO ALIENATE THE FL AND PF

6. OPTION C WOULD:

--HELP US MAINTAIN CREDIT WITH AND ACCESS TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE
--WHILE STILL PARTIALLY ONE-SIDED AND NOT SATISFACTORY TO ANYONE
ELSE, AVOID THE WORST CONSEQUENCES OF OPTIONS A AND B
--PROBABLY INVOLVE A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT-TO-DECIDE BORDERLINE
CASES.

7. WE BELIEVE OPTION C, IF WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF
LAW, WOULD HAVE FEWER RISKS FOR US THAN EITHER OF THE
FIRST TWO OPTIONS AND WOULD PROVIDE A DEFENSIBLE RATIONALE
FOR DECISIONS ON WHICH MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM REGIME
WOULD RECEIVE US VISAS AND WHICH WOULD NOT. AS THE
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SITUATION LOOSENS UP AND MORE CONTACT IS MADE WITH THE
VARIOUS PARTIES, WE BELIEVE OUR VISA POLICY SHOULD REFLECT
THE CHANGES ALLOWABLE WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF LAW. THIS IS
PARTICULARLY TRUE WITH REGARD TO AFRICANS FROM RHODESIA WISHING
TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES. CONTINUATION OF A SHARPLY RESTRICTIVE
POLICY IN OUR VIEW DOES NOT PARTICULARLY IMPRESS OUR
FRIENDS AT THIS TIME AND HARMS OUR OWN INTERESTS IN DEVELOPING
CONTACT WITH INFLUENTIAL AFRICANS WHO WILL PLAY A ROLE IN THE
FUTURE OF THE NATION WHOEVER MAY EMERGE AS ITS GOVERNMENT.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: AMBASSADOR LOW CONCURS IN THE
RECOMMENDATION THAT THE DEPARTMENT GIVE EARLY CONSIDERATION
TO REVIEWING ITS VISA POLICY AND ADOPTING A NEW POSITION
ALONG THE LINES OF PARA 6 ABOVE. EDMONDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISAS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PRETOR03644
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780267-0853
Format: TEL
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780612/aaaaajrk.tel
Line Count: 150
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 48354f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION VO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 CAPE TOWN 1198
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2178782
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: US POLICY ON VISAS
TAGS: PORG, CVIS, RH, US
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/48354f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014